

BOOK REVIEWS

Sorry States: Apologies in International Politics

Jennifer Lind

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It is rather commonplace to compare Japan and Germany in daily life. Both the countries are economic powers and had similar historical developments in the twentieth century. However, it is rather difficult to draw successful academic comparisons between Japan and Germany. *Sorry States* is certainly one of the rare comparative analyses of the two countries. This book highlights the remembrance and reconciliation in modern international relations. Japan's unapologetic remembrance of its history and the Korean distrust of Japan are in contrast to (West) Germany's often-praised contrition and reconciliation with France.

Discussions on modern history and the remembrance of the war are rather delicate issues. The author develops analytical methods in order to deal with these subtle issues in Chapter 1. Analyzing both official and general statements, the author evaluates the extent to which remembrance affects the perceptions of a country's intentions and the extent to which remembrance directs the overall threat assessment. The South Korean perceptions of Japan (Chapter 2) and the French perceptions of Germany (Chapter 3) are selected as case studies. To discard the possibility that these cases are idiosyncratic, the author introduces short case

studies concerning the Chinese and Australian perceptions of Japan and British perceptions of Germany (Chapter 4).

The findings of this study have many implications. Japan's unapologetic remembrance sustains its distrust in South Korea, China, and Australia. Germany's acknowledgement of its atrocities facilitated its reconciliation with France and Great Britain. This study shows that although Germany's contrition was not significant during the early post-war years, since France was not interested in German contrition and adopted the 'nonaccusatory approach', the reconciliation was successful.

A more important finding is that potential dangers are associated with contrition. In the case of Japan, the backlash owing to contrition hindered the reconciliation with its neighbors. Following official announcements concerning contrition, many politicians denied or justified Japan's past deeds. The contrition angered the conservatives and stimulated them to react, which rendered the official contrition naught. This backlash hindered the process of reconciliation. These cycles of 'contrition and backlash' hindered the process of reconciliation between Japan and South Korea. Germany did not experience this contrition and backlash cycle. Lind explains the lack of German backlash owing to Germany's strategic constraints during the Cold War. Because Germany was committed to reunification, rearmament, and integration with the West, it had no incentive to deny or glorify its past.

Lind argues, as an important policy implication of her study, that the kind of remembrance that is beneficial for international reconciliation is a middle ground between whitewashing and contrition. Whitewashing the past atrocities infuriates the victims, and thus, hinders reconciliation, while highly extensive contrition triggers backlash in domestic politics under certain conditions.

The extensive study of the numerous official and general statements is impressive. Chapters 2 and 3 offer highly useful materials to most of those readers who are interested in the issue of either Japanese or German post-war reconciliation. However, for those who are highly familiar with Japanese and German discussions, the description provided in this book might lack some detailed nuances. However, the major contribution of the study is that two highly complex cases of Japan–South Korea and Germany–France are successfully compared and analyzed by the theoretical framework introduced in Chapter 1.

Although the careful discussions in this book are rather persuasive, some questions remain. The historic picture of the ‘*Kniefall*’ (West-German Chancellor Brandt fell on his knees during his visit to the Warsaw Ghetto memorial) is used on the cover of this book. As stated by Lind, it is certainly the most famous act of contrition in the world. Although Lind suggests considering the case of Poland for future research, owing to various complications caused by the Cold War disputes, it is not discussed in detail. After the end of the Cold War and especially after Poland joined the European Union, the perception of German contrition in Poland has been rather problematic. This is also the case with Czech’s perception of Germany. Cases related to Germany’s eastern neighbors appear to resemble the Japan–Korea case. Although no backlash was observed in the German–French case and Lind excludes the problem of extremists in the society from her discussion, Poland now appears to observe every discussion of any nature in the German society from highly skeptical perspectives.

For many Japanese readers, Lind’s total exclusion of Taiwan from her discussion would appear somewhat strange. Taiwan might be an idiosyncratic case, but at least for many Japanese readers, Taiwan’s perception of and discussions on Japan’s past, which are rather different from those of South Korea, raise questions on the interpretation of Japan’s colonial past. If Lind had provided some short comparisons of South Korea’s perception of Japan along with Taiwan’s perceptions, her discussion would have been more persuasive to Japanese readers.

This book sometimes discusses the relationship between the maturity of democracy and threat perception. Lind argues that democratization and common membership in international institutions help the process of reconciliation. However, it is usually rather controversial to define how mature a democracy is. Lind does not discuss this point further. To elaborate the discussion, it might be helpful to consider how far the political system, party system, and political leadership conditioned the discussion on contrition. For example, although both German Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and Japan’s Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) were dominant parties since the mid-1950s, the political leadership and the style of discussion control in each party was extremely different. (West) Germany’s political system and party system were, and still are, highly unique because of the failure of democracy before WWII. Further, this unique system helped to prevent political backlash after

contrition. This unique system combined with the especially stable and strong leadership of Adenauer and de Gaulle contributed to the reconciliation in Europe. The leadership made the 'nonaccusatory approach' possible and successful. The European integration together with the security arrangement of NATO anchored the process in the right direction. These elements were not observed in the Japan–Korea relationship.

As Lind admits, the results of this book cannot serve as the last word on the effects of remembrance on interstate reconciliation. However, this bold comparative analysis offers several materials for future research. In this sense, *Sorry State* contributes to opening new research fields of historical reconciliation.

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Citizens and the State: Attitudes in Western Europe and East and Southeast Asia. Routledge Innovations in Political Theory 29

Takashi Inoguchi and Jean Blondel

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After *Political Culture in Asia and Europe* (2006), this is the second volume by these authors exploring the results of a survey conducted in 18 countries of Western Europe and East and Southeast Asia in the year 2000. Examining the views of approximately 1,000 respondents in each country, they use factor analysis to group countries according to their citizens' perceptions of the state. In particular, they scrutinize the